



Games Workshop – Bringing fantasy worlds to British tabletops

Video transcript

IAN LIVINGSTONE:

Forty years ago, I helped to create a company that changed the way British people play games. It also provided an unexpected catalyst for the digital phenomenon.

Steve Jackson and I set up Games Workshop in 1975 – a company that would bring a brand new game to the UK.

Dungeons & Dragons was unlike any other game. It had no board, no fixed rules and no end!

One player – the Dungeon Master – dreamt up their own elaborate story set in a fantasy land. Friends got together and used their imaginations to play out their characters' lives with tabletop figures. At every turn of the story, they'd roll dice to determine their outcome.

Dungeons & Dragons enjoyed phenomenal popularity based on little more than word of mouth recommendations. Steve and I put on a huge Games Day conventions. Thousands of people gathered in halls to play D&D.

And it wasn't just board games that were totally re-imagined.

Steve Jackson and I wrote a series of game books, these were not just a passive experience for the reader – these were books in which YOU were the hero who chose your own way through the books.

VOICE OF BOY:

Turn to page 90, draw your sword and fight them!

IAN LIVINGSTONE:

Collecting items and risking your character's health in battle all added to the excitement.

Many of the techniques found in these game books became commonplace in future computer games.

This was the beginning of interactive gaming. So when the home computing revolution began, a few clever Brits were well placed to take these ideas and digitise them... giving birth to Britain's first interactive video games.

Timeline cover image of Lara Croft courtesy of Topfoto

Archive photos of Games Workshop and of Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson courtesy of Ian Livingstone

Archive photo of Games Day convention courtesy of Steve Jackson

Archive video clip of Fighting Fantasy advert courtesy of Icon Books